sections of the society particularly SC/ST population. In almost all the schemes/programmes adequate coverage of the Scheduled Castes beneficiaries is ensured.

(b) The NSFDC has extended benefits to 2,12,121 Scheduled Caste beneficiaries in addition to the 281 Scheduled Castes artisans.

(c) NSFDC's monitoring mechanism has been strengthened by way of (i) submission of Quarterly Progress Reports and (ii) periodic Utilization Drives undertaken by NSFDC, and (iii) random inspections of beneficiary units by NSFDC Officials and independent agencies.

**Declaration of other backward classes**

1463. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chettri, Bhawan and Newar Castes have been declared as Other Backward Classes (OBC) by the State Government of Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government to recognize these castes as OBCs in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The Government of Sikkim vide Extra Ordinary Gazette Notification No. 308, dated 9th September, 2003 has declared the three Communities viz. (i) BAHUN, (ii) CHETTRI and (iii) NEWAR as Other Backward Classed for the State of Sikkim.

(c) Does not arise.

**Construction of night shelters**

1464. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to build night shelters to accommodate homeless persons in every district;